

F 44

.N8 W3





C234
146



BY

FRED WEBSTER

146
G334



1920

North Gateway

BY

FRED WEBSTER

PICTURESQUE

NORTH CONWAY

Ms. H.

Ten Drawings from my Sketch-Book while rambling in the
Valley of the Saco

F. W. Weston



FOR SALE BY
DAMRELL & UPHAM (OLD CORNER BOOKSTORE)
280 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON

1889

COPYRIGHTED
FRED WEBSTER
1880

IN MEMORY OF

My Wife

1885

ILLUSTRATIONS.

	- - - - -	PAGE
<i>North Conway Ledges</i>	- - - - -	<i>Cover</i>
<i>Enchanted Woods</i>	- - - - -	9
<i>Mount Kearsarge</i>	- - - - -	11
<i>Thompson's Falls</i>	- - - - -	13
<i>Echo Lake</i>	- - - - -	15
<i>Pitman's Arch</i>	- - - - -	17
<i>Diana's Baths</i>	- - - - -	19
<i>The Intervale</i>	- - - - -	21
<i>Artist's Falls</i>	- - - - -	23
<i>Moonlight on the Saco</i>	- - - - -	25
<i>Bartlett Boulder</i>	- - - - -	27

RAMBLES.

—•—
“If thou art worn and hard beset
With sorrows that thou wouldst forget,
If thou wouldst read a lesson that will keep
Thy heart from fainting and thy soul from sleep,
Go to the woods and hills! No tears
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears.” — LONGFELLOW.

WHEN the first wild-flowers bloomed along the roadsides, we began to think of an outing. Where should we go for a few early summer rambles? Somehow we got to talking about North Conway.

“Let us have a look at the White Mountains from the elf-land vales of the Saco,” said one.

“I could eat a mountain this minute!” cried the other.

Forty-eight hours later we had been whirled northward past Chocorhua’s sky-piercing peak, and had settled in our comfortable lodgings between Kearsarge, “lifting his Titan forehead to the sun,” and “the league-long ridge” of Moat.

New Hampshire has been well called the Switzerland of America. Therein, against all rivals, North Conway retains, and may be expected to keep, its surpassing attractions to artists and tourists. It is “beautiful for situation” to a degree not realized except by those who stay there long enough to take its walks and drives, and witness the magical transformations of its scenery. “Nature,” says Drake, “has formed here a vast antechamber, into which you are ushered through a gate-way of mountains upon the numerous inner courts, galleries, and cloisters of her most secluded retreats.” “Certainly,” said Starr King, “we have seen no other region of New England so swathed in dreamy charm.”

Our first ramble, on the morning after our arrival, was in the Enchanted Woods, a spacious grove of tall pines and lesser growths lying close to the village on the north—“a sable, silent, solemn forest.” Philosophers who want to muse will find this a delightful spot—provided they are above such petty annoyances as mosquitoes. Lovers who want to get away from an unsympathizing world can find no more charming retreat than this—in pleasant weather. Artists who seek exquisite woodland effects will not miss them here. And just here, where the silence is broken only by the soft sighing of the wind in the tree-tops, and the commingled sounds of



Enchanted Woods.



the tiny denizens of the wood, at the entrance to this high-arched and dusky avenue, so suggestive of the enchanted groves of which Ariosto and Tasso sung, let us sit down and make a sketch.

North of the Enchanted Woods are the Cathedral Woods, and still farther away rises in airy outlines the huge but graceful pyramid of Mount Kearsarge. The views to be had of this mountain all through the valley are innumerable, and without exception delightful; for Kearsarge is, as some one has said, "a mountain with a soul in it." It is not a very high peak, in comparison with the monarchs that guard the Notch, but is so placed that its three thousand feet show through all the landscape to the utmost advantage. It is easily ascended, and there is a house on its summit that is open for a time in mid-summer.

"Oh, lift thy head, thou mountain lone,
And mate thee with the sun!
Thy rosy clouds are vaward blown,
Thy stars that near at midnight shone,
Gone heavenward, one by one.
And half of earth, and half of air,
Thou risest vast, and gray, and bare,
And crowned with glory."

One bright warm morning we walked a little more than a mile and a half to Echo Lake, which lies near the northern end of Moat Mountain, and is watched over on its western side by two of the famous ledges which extend for several miles along the valley. These cliffs are "shagged with wood" and highly picturesque. The lake is a lovely little "mirror of the skies."





Here we drank in balm and quietness amid surroundings the same that the Indian hunter found, centuries ago, when panting in the chase he came suddenly upon this rare scene of sylvan loveliness. How limpid the waters, save when darkening near the lofty cliffs, broken by the leaping fish, and occasionally touched by the kissing breeze. Lift your voice and count the sweet resonances that are thrown successively back from rock and wood and glen.

Not far from the Cathedral Ledge is Diana's Baths, "where a mountain brook dashes and slides downward over long sheets and shelves of granite, with here and there a bright little cascade, or a deep water-worn pool cut in the solid rock, and around which the swirling stream rushes in sparkling eddies, polishing the ledges to a glassy smoothness." One charming spot, though not everybody has seen it or can easily find it, is up among the thick woods through which Elm Brook finds its tortuous and mysterious way, a little south of the White Horse Ledge. Here is "a loud and white-robed waterfall." Thompson's Falls well repay the toil of a visit to those who have the courage and the limbs to find it.

A pleasant drive, with an interesting object in view, is north about six miles, a little beyond Glen Station, to the Bartlett Boulder, which is near the roadside on an elevation above the Saco. It stands, a huge bulk, poised upon a few smaller boulders, just where it was left in some mighty landslide perhaps before "Adam delved and Eve span" — "monumental of an earlier world." Leaving the Boulder, following the road south through the covered bridge over the Saco, and taking an easterly course overlooking the valley, we gaze enraptured upon a magnificent panorama.





"Mountains stern and desolate,
But in the majesty of distance now
Set off, and to our view appearing fair
Of aspect, with aerial aspect clad,
And beautified with morning's purple
beams."

After a while we come to Humphrey's Ledge, about two miles north of the Cathedral Ledge. Here is to be seen, high up on the front of the cliff, facing the east, the curious and much-visited Pitman's Arch. "From the cavern inside this noble Gothic arch one may look out across the tree-tops below, and over the bends of the silvery Saco, flashing through its sweet intervalles, and so on to the tall mountains that enwall the vale and raise their dark sierras against the sky." The top of Humphrey's Ledge may be reached by carriage. It is a hard climb, but the view from the top amply repays the climber.

"Touched by a light that hath no name,
A glory never sung,
Aloft on sky and mountain wall
Are God's great pictures hung."

We sought in our rambles the picturesque and interesting localities south of the village, between the Green Hills and the Saco. They occur chiefly along the course of a winding, gurgling, and sometimes dashing stream that has its rise at the foot of Green Mountain, and, after flowing a little more than two miles, delivers itself into the broad bosom of the Saco. This is Artist's Brook. It abounds in all the captivating features of a mountain brook. Now it hurries, and anon it moves slowly like a capricious child meditating some new freak; it "tumbles down the woody steeps"; it widens into "whitening shallows"; it goes straight forward; it turns and twists about; at times it wears a sober look, and at times it laughs gleefully up through the interlacing branches of overhanging trees; it seeks the shadows; it dances or sleeps in the sunshine.





"I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers ;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.
I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows ;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

Two points of special interest to lovers of the picturesque, along this charming stream, are Artist's Falls and the neighborhood of the old mill — "a favorite sketching-ground of artists." The Falls are at the foot of Peaked Mountain, about a mile east of the road. When seen to the best advantage, in "exquisite tangles of foliage and light," they justify their reputation. "The brook," says Drake, "flowing first over a smooth granite ledge, collects in a little pool below, out of which the pure water filters



Moonlight.
on the Saco.



through boulders and among glittering pebbles to a gorge between two rocks, down which it plunges. The beauty of this cascade consists in its waywardness. Now it is a thin sheet, flowing demurely along; now it breaks out in uncontrollable antics; and at length, as if tired of this sport, darts like an arrow down the rocky fissure, and is a mountain brook again."

One of the pictures which are forever a part of the soul's wealth is that obtained at some well-chosen spot, of the choicest section of the famous Intervale. Looking north, across this Edenic scene, as "soft as the landscape of a dream," above the lowlands that once constituted the bed of a vast flood of waters, "nowhere is the unapproachable grandeur of Mount Washington more fully manifested." Over the lesser heights of the middle distance, "the great peak lords it with undisputed sway. The bold and firm, though gradual, lines of ascent culminating at the apex, extend over leagues of sky." Another scene which for us hangs high in memory's gallery is that of the Saco River by moonlight.

"Sweet stream! it were a fate divine,
Till this world's toils and tasks were done,
To go, like those bright floods of thine,
Refreshing all, enslaved by none,—
To pass through scenes of calm and strife,
Singing, like thee, with holy mirth,
And close in peace a varied life,
Unsullied by one stain of earth."

H 106 89 4





HECKMAN
BINDERY INC.



OCT 89



N. MANCHESTER,
INDIANA 46962

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 014 874 A

